

by MARA HOBERMAN

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Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles"

GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL, Paris

March 15–April 27, 2013

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Hot on the heels of her first solo exhibition with Chantal Crousel ("Ajar" at the gallerist's satellite showroom, La Douane, October 18–December 7, 2012), Haegue Yang's current show at Crousel's flagship gallery moves beyond the venetian blind installations and drying rack sculptures for which the South Korean-born, Berlin-based artist is best known. These signature works, however, do make a two-dimensional cameo in photographic wallpaper—a collaboration with designer Manuel Raeder—that covers three walls at one end of the gallery. *Field of Teleportation* (2011) is a disorienting digital collage combining installation shots from Yang's past exhibitions with not-to-scale images of individual works. Domesticized with a pair of easy chairs, a standing ashtray, and a dining table set, this room is a habitable microcosm of Yang's oeuvre. The only actual sculpture in the room is a small venetian blind in a powdercoated steel frame installed low on the wall, just beneath its own photographic image. *Manteuffelstrasse 112 – Single and Solid (bathroom radiator)* (2010)—a window/radiator hybrid—reacquaints the viewer with Yang's alternate reality wherein useful household items are reborn as nonfunctional curios. But apart from a sculpture/bench made from nine colorful vintage side tables (*Facilitating Pentagon Seating* [2013]), Yang's latest works appear freed from the domestic sphere. Her most recent objects have more in common with geometric abstraction and the materials are less crafty than the yarn, paper maché, and origami she has previously favored.

The *Sonic Rotating Ovals* (2013) are three wall-mounted ovoid forms covered completely with small bells—of the festive variety used to decorate door wreaths or Christmas stockings. Mounted at eye-level on facing walls, the ovals are designed to rotate on a central axis. With one push they can be sent spinning like a game show money wheel. Once in motion the ovals become circular blurs (hence exhibition's title.) Known for creating experiences that incorporate non-visual elements like scent and heat, the artist here appeals to our senses of touch and hearing. With no handle, button, or otherwise designated spot at which to activate the work, these objects' bumpy and cool metallic surfaces are meant to be manhandled. The consequent clamor of ringing bells ebbs from frantic reverberations to cheery jingles before ceasing completely once the sculpture reclaims its equilibrium on the wall.

Also made with jingle bells, two freestanding sculptures populate the center of the gallery with an eerie humanoid presence. Bloated and amorphous, the bell-dazzled bodies of *Sonic Nickel Dance* and *Sonic Brass Dance* (both 2013) are stabilized by vertical steel poles and stand just under seven feet and six feet, respectively. Industrial metal handles protrude from three sides of the sculptures' midsections like bent arms. The figures' feet are a star of metal wheels that look like they originally belonged to a swivel chair or an IV stand. Consistent with Yang's penchant for imbuing ostensibly inelegant forms with surprising grace—exemplified by her photographic series of a drying rack in various acrobatic positions (*Gymnastics of the Foldables* [2006]) and her venetian blind walkers ("Dress Vehicles" [2011–2012])—these beings make charmingly awkward dance partners.

At the opposite end of the gallery from the wallpapered room, two subtly rendered geometric works act as a foil to *Field of Transportation's* overwhelming jumble of representational imagery. Redefining and creating space in an entirely different way, *56.27 m3* and *27.12 m2* (both 2000/2013), are two separate works that have been installed together to cordon off a large triangular space at one corner of the gallery. *27.12 m2* covers two abutting walls with thin horizontal stripes of red chalk, evenly spaced from floor to ceiling at 10 cm apart. Stretching between these two walls, *56.27 m3* forms a hypotenuse with lengths of red thread (also spaced 10 cm apart). The effect is like a three-dimensional Sol Le Witt wall



1 View of Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2013.



2 Haegue Yang, *Manteuffelstrasse 112 – Single and Solid (bathroom radiator)*, 2010.



3 Haegue Yang, *Facilitating Pentagon Seating*, 2013.



4 Haegue Yang, *Sonic Rotating Ovals – Brass Plated*, 2013.

drawing wherein the space captured inside the triangle is simultaneously orderly and disorienting. Reiterating themes of permeability and filtration associated with Yang's venetian blind works, this installation is a more delicate evocation of displacement.

The "Rotating Notes" series (2013) in the gallery's back room reprises the rotating oval form. In this case, the wall-mounts' surfaces are smooth magnetic boards adorned with small squares of typed text. These are in fact excerpts from Yang's research towards her recent installation at Munich's Haus der Kunst, *Accommodating the Epic Dispersion – On Non-cathartic Volume of Dispersion* (2012). Exposing her source material, Yang invites the viewer to consider accounts describing various postcolonial diasporas. The subject matter is heavy, but the presentation is characteristically energetic. Set a-whirl, the thought boards' contents flutter and slide, evoking a dizzying visualization of forced migration.

While moving away from what she has referred to as a process of "domestication," (1) Yang continues to explore themes of disorientation and displacement. Subtler than her previous exhibitions featuring functional-turned-fanciful household objects in labyrinthine settings, "Ovals and Circles" offers a more conceptual experience of disarticulation. Though her cache of materials—bells, thread, magnets, chalk, and various industrial accessories—remains rooted in the everyday, Yang's latest abstract and geometric forms are unsettling not because they subvert a prescribed functionality, but because they create a new one.

(1) Artist interview with Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson in *Flash Art*, vol. 282 (January–February 2012).

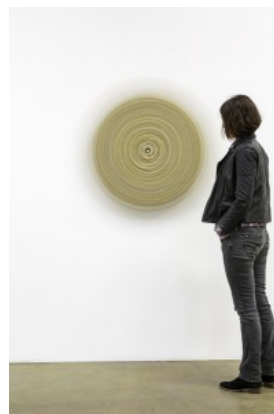
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5 Haegue Yang, *Sonic Rotating Ovals – Brass Plated*, 2013.



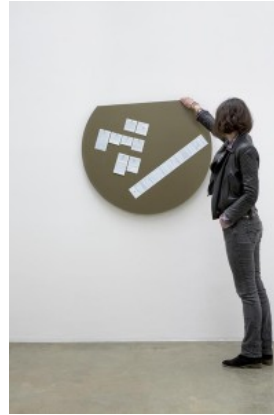
6 View of Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2013.



7 View of Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2013.



8 View of Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2013.



9 Haegue Yang, *Rotating Notes – Dispersed Episode IV*, 2013.



10 View of Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2013.

- 1 View of Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2013. On the wall: Haegue Yang, *Field of Teleportation*, 2011. Printed wall paper, dimensions variable. All images courtesy of Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photos by Florian Kleinfenn.
- 2 Haegue Yang, *Manteuffelstrasse 112 – Single and Solid (bathroom radiator)*, 2010. Aluminum Venetian blinds, powdercoated steel frame, perforated metal plates, light bulbs, cable, 87 x 49 x 5 cm.
- 3 Haegue Yang, *Facilitating Pentagon Seating*, 2013. Bench, driftwood, kidney table, sewing box, newspaper stand, ash tray, globe, 115 x 275 x 190 cm.
- 4 Haegue Yang, *Sonic Rotating Ovals – Brass Plated*, 2013. Wall-mounted sculpture, powder-coated steel sheet, ball bearings, metal grid, 100 x 80 cm.
- 5 Haegue Yang, *Sonic Rotating Ovals – Brass Plated*, 2013. Wall-mounted sculpture, powder-coated steel sheet, ball bearings, metal grid, 100 x 80 cm.
- 6 View of Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2013. Foreground: Haegue Yang, *Sonic Nickel Dance*, 2013. Steel stand, silver bells, rings 205 cm x 100 cm.
- 7 View of Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2013.
- 8 View of Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2013.
- 9 Haegue Yang, *Rotating Notes – Dispersed Episode IV*, 2013. Wall-mounted sculpture, powder-coated steel sheet, ball bearings, note prints, 100 x 70 cm.
- 10 View of Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2013.

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